Sir Geoffrey Jefferson, C.B.E., F.R.S., Emeritus Professor of Neurosurgery at Manchester University and consulting neurosurgeon to the Manchester Royal Infirmary, died on January 29th, 1961, at the age of 74. His death is mourned with affectionate respect by a host of friends and colleagues the world over. Our sincere sympathy is extended to his sons, Dr. Michael Jefferson and Mr. Antony Jefferson, and his daughter Lady Monica Bruce Gardner.

Jefferson was born in Rochdale, Durham, on April 10th, 1886. His father, Dr. A. J. Jefferson was a general practitioner and surgeon in Rochdale. Jefferson's education at the Manchester Grammar School was, he often indicated when discussing schools, a great and fortunate experience. He studied medicine at the University of Manchester where he won the Sidney Renshaw prize in physiology and the University of London prize in anatomy. He was graduated with a London degree in medicine in 1909, passing with honours. He became a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1911. In 1913 he was awarded the Gold Medal by Manchester University when he was graduated as Master of Surgery.

Jefferson served as house surgeon at the Manchester Royal Infirmary under Professor G. A. Wright, and in London at the Royal Cancer Hospital and at the Victoria Hospital for Children. A term as demonstrator in the Manchester University Department of Anatomy, under Professor Elliot Smith, initiated his interest in neurology. He published several papers on the anatomy of the cerebral convolutions.

In 1914, he was married to Gertrude, daughter of A. C. Flumerfelt of Victoria, British Columbia. Dr. Flumerfelt was a former medical student at Manchester. They went to Victoria anticipating a good opening for the practice of surgery. Shortly, World War I began and he returned to Britain to join the R.A.M.C. In 1915, he was invited by Sir Robert Waterhouse to join an Anglo-Russian hospital and to go to Russia. This Jefferson did, working with the hospital in St. Petersburg in the palace of the Grand Duke Dimitri on the Nevski Prospect until the Revolution. Viewed from the vantage point of a balcony of the hospital-palace the clashes between the crowds of people and the Cossacks on the Nevski Prospect left indelible memories and created for him an unusual awareness of sociological problems. The Marinsky Theatre, the Ballet, and Karsavina whom he visited in London after a return trip to Russia in 1936 with the British Medical Association, left equally vivid and more pleasant memories.

Following his return from Russia in 1917, he was sent to France to the 14th General Hospital of the R.A.M.C., and in 1918 he was made responsible for the casualties with head wounds. After the war, he studied the pathological material from these casualties with Sir Arthur Keith. From this experience emerged two valuable publications, "The Physiological Pathology of Gunshot Wounds of the Head," and "Gunshot Wounds of the Scalp with Special Reference to the Neurological Signs Presented." This work proved its value in World War II.

After World War I, he spent time visiting Cushing at the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital in Boston and on his return to Manchester was appointed as a general surgeon to the Salford Royal Hospital in Manchester. In 1926, he became the first neurosurgeon to the Manchester Royal Infirmary with but four beds at his disposal. Gradually, Jefferson's reputation grew and his unit expanded.

In 1933 he received an invitation, rare for any physician or surgeon outside London, to join the staff of the National Hospital, Queen Square. Until World War II he visited London every two weeks to consult and operate. The resident staff came to anticipate keenly the consulting, operating and leisurely thought-provoking conversation associated with Jefferson's visit. Jefferson later spoke of the pleasure and profit he derived from "rubbing brains" with this group of young men.

At the Manchester Royal Infirmary, between 1926 and 1939, with limited facilities and amid pressures generated by his own skills and by the paucity of neurosurgeons in the north west of England, Jefferson continued to think and to contribute with originality. He wrote some 40 papers during this period gaining recognition on the international scene as a leader in neurosurgery. In 1939, Manchester University created the first chair of neurological surgery in Britain, with him the first professor.

The year of his appointment to the Manchester Royal Infirmary saw the founding of the Society of British Neurological Surgeons, for which he was primarily responsible. He was the first secretary and continued in office until 1952. He was President in 1934–36 and again in 1954–56. His personal influence upon the growth and development of the Society was a major contribution to British neurosurgery. The tradition that the discussion of papers read before the Society should be candid and critical, yet informal and unfettered by time, is attributable to Jefferson. Not uncommonly a paper provoked an exceedingly valuable discussion and very often Jefferson's original way of thinking, great experience and sense of humour provided its central direction. In no small measure his efforts helped to establish liaison between the British Society and its European counterparts.

In World War II, Jefferson served as Consultant Advisor in neurosurgery to the Ministry of Health and the Emergency Medical Service. In Britain the Emergency Medical Service treated the great majority of neurosurgical casualties caused by enemy action, members of the armed forces and civilians alike. The responsibility of